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TAGS: OPRC KMDR TU PREL KPAO
SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2009

Media Highlights

"Obama Doesn't Deserve the Prize" headlines mainstream Hurriyet Online, noting that "President Obama's Nobel prize acceptance ceremony came just days after he announced that he would send more troops to fight the war in Afghanistan." The paper also notes, according to Q Poll's survey conducted in the US that "66 percent of the Americans think the 'President of War' doesn't deserve the Nobel Peace Prize in a period in which wars in Iraq and Afghanistan still continue." Islamist-oriented Zaman Online writes in "Obama Goes to Norway for the Nobel," that Obama's speech is expected to focus on the Afghanistan issue." Mainstream Aksam Online headlines "Keeping the Program Short Makes Norwegians Upset," and opines that "Norwegians think President Obama's decision to shorten the program was discourteous."

Shocking Resignation by the Turkish Ambassador to US (Radikal) Turkish media are extensively covering the resignation of Turkish Ambassador to the US Nabi Sensoy - leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet headlines "Surprise Resignation," while Islamist-oriented Zaman claims "Washington Ambassador Resigns" In newscasts throughout the evening and today, the story dominates on NTV, HaberTurk and CNNTurk, which claims in "Ambassadorial Crisis" that the Ambassador resigned over a protocol flap during the Obama-Erdogan meeting. According to mainstream Milliyet, Ambassador Sensoy failed to pass a Turkish Foreign Ministry request to the White House for a four-way meeting with foreign ministers attending. Milliyet reports that when questioned by FM Davutoglu, Sensoy responded saying "No, I did not. You may remove me from office if you want." Mainstream Vatan speculates that Sensoy resigned because he was kept at a distance by Erdogan and his delegation during the visit, while liberal Radikal points the finger at the US which it says instigated the problem with its request for a one-on-one meeting.

DTP Closure Case/Attacks on DTP Offices/US Permits DTP to Open an Office in Washington
Islamist-oriented Yeni-Safak reports that the 11 member Constitutional Court continued intensive work yesterday on the DTP case and is determined to finalize the case as soon as possible. According to mainstream Vatan, DTP closure tensions erupted in parliament when several AKP deputies interrupted a DTP deputy, who

was accusing the AKP government over the closure case, and told her to "shut up." Vatan reports an armed attack Tuesday night against DTP offices in Ankara and Kecioren and says four suspects, including three Southeast veterans were taken into custody in connection with Kecioren attacks. Yeni Safak and Radikal report that while DTP is waiting to hear the Constitutional Court decision on the party's future, the US Embassy in Ankara sent a letter to DTP headquarters, saying that the DTP request to open a branch in Washington was approved. If the party is not closed, the bureau in Washington will be opened in 2010. Papers note that the Embassy officials visited the party headquarters just a day before the case taken by the court, and gave them the green light.

Editorial Whirl: Erdogan-Obama Meeting

Semih Idiz writes in mass appeal Milliyet: "In their meeting in the Oval Office, President Obama told Prime Minister Erdogan the US also thinks Iran has the right to access nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Iran, however, has a responsibility to relieve the concerns of the world. 'Since your ties with Iran are good, you should push Tehran toward that position,' Obama told Erdogan. It seems that Erdogan's advocacy of Iran could not change Washington's perception. Moreover, on Monday the Iranian Foreign Ministry made a statement to the effect that 'We don't want Turkey in this.' It's clear that the Iran issue will be a headache for the Erdogan government."

Sedat Ergin observes in mass appeal Hurriyet: "Before the Obama-Erdogan meeting, White House officials gave a special briefing

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to the press and shared a statement saying the US sees no problem with Turkey talking to Iran. What's important for them, however, is the conveyance of the same message to Iran. Turkey can play a useful potential role only if its messages are in accord with that of the US and the international community. If Turkey adopts this approach and conveys to Iran that we are serious about the suggestions we have laid on the table, then Turkey's mediation role may turn positive. If they do not support the approach, which has widespread international support, then there won't be much space in which to play a critical role for Turkey."

Fehmi Koru comments in Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak: "It's something new that during his visit to Washington, Prime Minister Erdogan spoke what he honestly believed instead of giving the US side what they want to hear, and did not bend his words in the speeches he delivered in the gatherings open to all. It's noteworthy that Obama's attitude has been new as well. Instead of speaking about the formulas he had voiced before [becoming President], Obama seemed to adopt the approach of 'increasing military presence' which befitting more his predecessor Bush regarding the resolution of the main international conflicts. It's really positive for Obama that he listened to the 'Come to your senses' polite warning of his guest, and that he extended the time scheduled for the meeting. If he can produce policies in line with what he listened to, he might be able to find the most appropriate formula for even the toughest problems. In international relations, the US and everyone else will benefit if an egalitarian rhetoric dominates the ties with the US -- Erdogan's Washington visit has opened the door to that."

Mehmet Ali Birand writes in mass appeal Posta: "It's obvious that two events must have impressed Erdogan very much -- one of them is the bombing of Gaza, the other was when he had to wait at the border to Gaza for half an hour during his Israel visit. Again, he raged about Israel in the capital of the Jewish lobby. I asked myself, 'Was it necessary?' The 'One Minute' incident in Davos was very effective anyway, he collected a large bonus in the Arab world. Isn't that enough? I see that his insisting on this issue any further will not bring any more bonuses for Turkey or the prime minister."

"The New Turkey" Takes Center Stage in Region

Cuneyt Ulsever emphasizes in mass-appeal Hurriyet: "Before it pulls out of Iraq at the end of 2011, the US wants to leave northern Iraq under the protection of Turkey, and secure for the transfer of oil and gas from the region to the world markets through Turkey. Turkey

and the US have a common interest in the liquidation of the PKK in northern Iraq. The US doesn't want to fight the PKK in northern Iraq, and asks Turkey to find a political solution to the problem. However, the Turkish government's Kurdish democratic initiative is not working in the country. And it's not clear whether the US can even use the Incirlik Airbase while pulling out of Iraq. Can you imagine what would happen if the Turkish government, as it did it March 2003, again makes the US change its plans while withdrawing from Iraq?"

Sahin Alpay observes in Islamist-oriented Zaman: "In 1993, Turkey had problems with all of its neighbors, which were almost all supporting the PKK. The AK Party government has reversed this situation. In 1993, in a world newly emerging out of the Cold War, the US did not care much about democracy in Turkey. Today's US Administration sees that a pro-Western stability in Turkey can only be achieved through democracy and the majority of EU countries see the importance of democracy in Turkey for regional and global peace."

Hadi Uluengin writes in mass appeal Hurriyet: "The Zionist lobby in the US was alarmed when President Obama did not warn Turkey after the Davos outburst of Prime Minister Erdogan, and in connection with the neo-cons, they mobilized the think-tanks in the US which released floods of articles and analyses which blame the Ak Party of Islamism, and claim Turkey is drifting away from the West. There's

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an alliance between the leftists-nationalists and the neo-con, pro-Israeli circles. This alliance, however, does not stand a chance in the face of a new world and the new Turkey's dynamics. The new Turkey, with the approval of the US, is walking toward the horizons of a new world."

All Eyes Turn to Greece Regarding Halki Seminary
Vatan reports that following Erdogan's meeting with Obama, the re-opening of the Halki Seminary is on the agenda once again. Turkish Foreign and Education Ministries have been working on the issue. AKP officials explained the planned formula saying "the seminary can be opened as a vocational school giving high-school level education. And, under these conditions there is no need for legal or constitutional changes." Turkish officials noted that Greece is expected to take steps addressing the problems of the Turkish minority in Western-Thrace.

For Turkey's EU Bid, All Roads End in Cyprus (Sabah)
Mainstream Sabah reports that technical negotiations for Turkey's EU accession have reached a bottleneck due to political problems. The paper adds that Cyprus is the key issue and notes EU officials' statements that a settlement in the harbor controversy between Turkey and the Greek Cypriots is needed to avoid a further crisis.

Afghanistan: In "Mixed Signals from the US" mainstream Sabah reports "it's noteworthy that while the chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm Michael Mullen said the US was satisfied over the [non-combat] contribution of Turkey to International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) in Afghanistan, NSC Advisor James Jones recently commented the opposite, saying "the US will be happy if Turkish forces join military operations." Islamist-oriented Zaman in "US: We're Pleased with Turkey's Contribution in Afghanistan," reports, "Adm Mullen said the relationship between the US and Turkey was one of great importance and from the military-to-military standpoint it was on extremely solid ground."

"Climate Summit Sees Clash of Rich vs. Poor" headlines Hurriyet Daily News and predicts more discontent between rich and poor countries and highlights EPA head Lisa Jackson's appearance at the conference. In "Obama to Work with Congress Over Climate," Hurriyet DN notes that EPA's decision concerning greenhouse gases gives the President a new way to cut back but warns that Congress still needs to act on pending legislation. Turkish media highlights the World Bank development report and notes that Istanbul will have miserable weather in 40 years. Islamist-oriented Zaman Online gives full play to a complete translation of the NYT's Thursday Tomas Friedman article on why climate change is important.

TV News (CNN Turk)

Domestic

- Court of Appeals President Hasan Gerceker says the judiciary was target of systematic assaults

- DTP Tunceli deputy Serafettin Halis says PKK and DTP are representing the same group of people

- Finance Minister Mehmet Simsek says the increase in industrial output was an indication of the exit from recession

World

- Worldwide famous novelist Dan Brown arrived in Istanbul for the promotion of his latest novel

- Moody's Investors Service says the US and the UK must prove they can whittle down their ballooning deficits to avoid threats to their triple-A credit ratings

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